

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the non-final Office Action mailed April 9, 2004. Claims 1-4, 6-18, and 20-23 were examined in the Office Action and all were rejected. The specification has been amended to correct typographical errors. Claims 1, 4, 6-8, 10-12, 16 and 20 have been amended to further clarify claim scope and place the claims in a condition for allowance. New claims 24-28 have been added to specify a network connection between a variety of computer operating systems or to further differentiate claim scope. No new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and examination in view of the following remarks.

Substance of Interview Summary

A telephonic interview occurred between the undersigned, Murrell Blackburn, Primary Examiner Wayne Amsbury, and Examiner Cindy Nguyen on July 6, 2004. The interview covered the rejections to claims 1-4, 6-18, and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Richards et al (US 5,995,921, hereinafter "Richards").

With regard to independent claims 1, 10, and 11, the Primary Examiner agreed that although the invention in Richards may be implemented with a number of commercially available operating systems, Richards only discloses utilizing one operating system 200 to implement the invention. Specifically, the Examiner indicated that Richards may not teach "searching at least one database containing a plurality of help utilities including help utilities associated with a variety of computer operating systems." Secondly, the Primary Examiner indicated that the element of "executing the help utility" may be a distinctive feature for examination. Thirdly, the Primary Examiner acknowledged that although Fig. 2 of Richards shows Help files 228, the specification only discloses one help file 228 with a plurality of help panels. (See Richards column 6, line 50, and column 8, lines 43-44). Thus, the Primary Examiner indicated that Richards may not teach "searching a database containing a plurality of help utilities."

Further, with regard to claims 4, 12, 16, and 20, the Primary Examiner indicated that he agreed a match between character strings had to occur in Richards in order to select an answer to

a query. Thus, the Primary Examiner indicated that Richards may not teach "a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords". The undersigned agreed to write claim 4 in independent form as demonstrated in amended claims 12, 16, and 20. The Examiner agreed to examine the present application in view of the interview and amendments. The Examiner also agreed to call the undersigned if additional modifications are needed to move the application toward allowance.

This written response is thus, submitted in follow-up to the telephonic interview for consideration by the Examiner, as it is believed to have placed the application in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6-18, and 20-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 102(b) as being anticipated by Richards. Independent claims 1, 10-12, 16 and 20 have been amended and Applicants respectfully submit that the Richards reference does not teach each and every feature of Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended independent claims 1, 10-12, 16, and 20.

Claim 1

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 1 is drawn to a method of searching for a help utility, comprising among other features, the step of (1) searching at least one database containing a plurality of help utilities including help utilities associated with a variety of computer operating systems, (2) finding a help utility matching the keywords among the plurality of help utilities, and (3) executing the help utility. The claimed invention as recited in Applicants' amended claim 1 includes searching a database containing the actual help utilities defined in the specification as including wizards and/or help files. This plurality of help utilities includes help utilities associated with a variety of computer operating systems.

With regard to computer operating systems, the Office Action cites 202 and 200 of Fig. 2, corresponding text, and column 6, lines 6-42 of Richards to support an assertion that "Richards discloses help utilities provided by a plurality of computer operating systems". Applicants traverse this assertion and submit that because Richards only discloses a single operating system 200 controlling one or more applications 202, Richards does not teach or suggest searching a

database containing a plurality of help utilities where at least some of the help utilities are associated with a variety of computer operating systems. Richards discloses comparing a user-defined query with a series of lists 214-218 associated with information segments contained in an individual help file or base of information within an application controlled by a single computer operating system. (See column 4, lines 7-8 and 42-59, column 5, lines 9-11, and column 8, lines 25-30). The single help file 228 disclosed in Richards may include multiple help panels or information segments however, comparing lists associated with the help file 228 does not teach or suggest "searching a plurality of help utilities". Richards only discloses searching a single help file containing a plurality of information segments. (See column 6, lines 50-51, column 8, lines 25-44, and column 15, lines 40-41).

Further, because only a single help file is searched, Richards does not teach finding a help utility matching the keywords among the plurality of help utilities. As describe above, finding an information segment within a help file does not anticipate finding a help utility or help file among a plurality of help files as recited in amended claim 1.

Still further, the Office Action cites column 6, lines 6-42 in support of anticipating (3) executing the help utility. Applicants traverse this assertion and respectfully submit that the cited section of Richards mentions nothing regarding executing a help utility. Thus, Applicants' amended claim 1 is allowable over Richards because Richards does not anticipate searching a plurality of help utilities in association with a variety of computer operating systems, finding a help utility among the plurality, and executing the help utility found.

At least because claims 2, 4, and 6-9 inherit the language of amended claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2, 4, and 6-9 are also allowable over Richards.

Claim 4

Also with regard to amended claim 4, Applicants' claimed invention is drawn to the method of Claim 1, further comprising, among other features, the steps of (1) if after the step of searching the database containing the plurality of help utilities, no help utility is found matching the keywords but a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords is found, then displaying the related help utility and (2) invoking the related help utility. The Office Action states that Richards discloses finding and displaying a related help utility and cites column 8, lines 31-44 and 45-67 in support. Applicants' respectfully disagree and submit that the cited segments

of the reference make no mention of finding a related help utility upon finding no match. Thus, Richards does not teach or suggest finding a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords when no help utility is found matching the keywords. Richards teaches the display of information segments or help panels matching the search criteria, but does not address what happens when the search criteria cannot be matched. (See Richards column 10, lines 44-45 and column 11, lines 29-30) Further, Richards does not teach or suggest displaying related wizards and/or help files that closely approximate the inputted keywords for possible selection when no match occurs as recited in Applicants claim 4. A match must occur in Richards in order to produce a display (See Richards column 13, lines 4-11). Thus, amended claim 4 is allowable over Hickman for at least this reason also.

Claims 10-11

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 10 is drawn to a method of searching for a function wizard, comprising, among other features, the steps of (1) searching at least one database containing a plurality of wizards according to the search keywords wherein the plurality of wizards includes wizards provided by a variety of computer operating systems and (2) finding a wizard matching the search keywords. As described above with regard to amended claim 1, Richards teaches the searching of list entries that match search criteria, but does not teach or suggest searching a database containing the actual wizards provided by a variety of computer operating systems and finding a wizard matching the search keywords as recited in amended claim 10. The word lists searched by Richards are within a single application or operating system and thus, are not wizards provided by a plurality of computer operating systems. Thus, amended claim 10 is allowable over Richards.

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 11 is drawn to a method of searching for a function wizard, comprising, among other features, the steps of (1) providing at least one database containing a plurality of functions wherein the plurality of functions includes functions associated with a variety of computer operating systems and functions associated with a variety of computer software applications. As described above with regard to amended claims 1 and 10, Richards teaches searching word lists associated with information segments within a help file, not searching a database containing a plurality of the actual functions including functions associated with a variety of computer operating systems and software applications. The

word lists searched by Richards are not functions associated with a variety of computer operating systems and software applications. Thus, amended claim 11 is also allowable over Hickman.

Claim 12

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 12 is drawn to a computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer perform, among other features, the steps of (1) searching at least one database containing the plurality of help utilities including help utilities provided by a variety of at least one of computer software applications and computer operating systems and (2) if after the step of searching the database, no help utility is found matching the keywords but a related help utility is found that closely approximates the keywords, then displaying the related help utility.

In contrast, Richards teaches searching word lists within a single application or a single operating system, not searching a plurality of help utilities provided by a plurality of computer software applications and/or operating systems. As described above with regard to amended claim 1, the help file 228 taught in Richards may include a plurality of information segments, but does not comprise a plurality of help utilities provided by a variety of computer operating systems and/or software applications.

Further, as described above with regard to amended claim 4, Richards does not teach or suggest finding a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords when no help utility is found matching the keywords. Richards teaches the display of information segments when a match occurs between the word lists and the search criteria, but does not teach a display when the search criteria cannot be matched as recited in Applicants' amended claim 12. Thus, amended claim 12 is also allowable over Richards.

Because claims 13-15 inherit the language of amended claim 12, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 13-15 are also allowable over Richards at least for this reason.

Claim 16

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 16 is drawn to a system for searching for a help utility, comprising a computer program module operative, among other features, (1) if after the step of searching the database containing the plurality of help utilities, no help utility is found matching at least one of the search terms but a related help utility is found that closely approximates the search terms, to display the related help utility and (2) to invoke

the related help utility. As described above with regard to amended claims 4 and 12, Richards teaches the display of information segments when a match between word lists and the search criteria occurs, but does not teach a display when the search criteria cannot be matched. Richards does not teach or suggest displaying and invoking related wizards and/or help files that closely approximate the inputted keywords for possible selection as recited in Applicants amended claim 16. Thus, amended claim 16 is also allowable over Richards.

Because claims 17-18 inherit the language of amended claim 16, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 17-18 are also allowable over Richards at least for this reason.

Claim 20

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 20 is drawn to a computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer perform, among other steps, the steps of (1) searching a plurality of help utilities across a variety of computer operating systems and (2) if after the step of searching the plurality of help utilities, no help utility is found matching the keywords but a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords is found, then displaying the related help utility. As per amended claim 20, reasons for allowance have been noted in the arguments above with regard to amended claims 1 and 4. Thus, amended claim 20 is also allowable over Richards.

At least because claims 21-23 inherit the language of amended claim 20, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 21-23 are also allowable over Richards.

New Claims

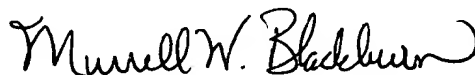
New claims 24-28 have been added to provide claims of varying scope than those initially filed. Applicants assert that these new claims are also allowable over the cited reference. For example, claim 25 recites that "in response to receiving the search keyword, searching a plurality of help utilities across at least one of a plurality of computer operating systems and a plurality of computer software applications". The cited reference does not teach searching more than one help utility across more than one computer operating system and/or software application.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: August 9, 2004

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Murrell W. Blackburn", is written over a horizontal line.

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